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Greek civil court rejects journalistic feud

ATHENS, Greece — An Athens court has thrown out two suits involving a Cypriot journalist and the publisher of a daily newspaper accused of having links with the KGB, the Soviet intelligence service, the court said yesterday.

The decision was based on a legal technicality, a court spokesman said. The one-day trial was held in May but the decision was made public yesterday.

The court rejected a suit filed by George Bobolas, publisher of Greece's largest circulation paper, Ethnos. He claimed $379,000 in damages to his reputation from a book by Paul Anastasi that alleged the left-wing newspaper was published in cooperation with the KGB's disinformation department.

A countersuit for $1.5 million filed by Mr. Anastasi, a 34-year-old Cypriot journalist who works as an Athens-based correspondent for The New York Times and London Daily Telegraph, was also turned down.

Mr. Anastasi said his professional reputation was damaged by articles about him in Ethnos and demanded compensation for tapping of his telephone and publication of the conversations in the newspaper.

The court ruled that the damages suits should have been presented to the criminal courts that judged earlier cases involving Mr. Bobolas and Mr. Anastasi. It said the suits could not be transferred to the jurisdiction of a civil court.

"The rejection was made purely and simply for legal reasons," said Mr. Anastasi's lawyer, Zisis Constantinou.

But a two-year-long legal tussle between the two men will continue later this year when an appeal court hears the phone-tapping case.

Mr. Bobolas and the newspaper's editor, Alexandros Filippopoulos, were each sentenced to five-month jail terms last April for making use of illegally acquired tapes of Mr. Anastasi's phone conversations. They went free pending the appeal court hearing.

They were acquitted of tapping Mr. Anastasi's telephone at The New York Times office in Athens on the grounds of insufficient evidence.

The appeal court will review both cases. No date has been set for the hearing.

Ethnos published extracts from conversations between Mr. Anastasi and an Athens lawyer in July 1983, soon after the journalist brought out his book, written in Greek, "Take the Nation In Your Hands." The title was a pun on Ethnos, which means, roughly, "nation."

— **Associated Press**

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